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March 10, 2023

Honourable Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education
228 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Ave
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister LaGrange:

Re: Follow-Up letter to FSD's February 23, 2023, letter regarding Educational Assistants and PBCO constraints.

I am writing today to follow-up on the initial letter I sent on behalf of the Foothills School Division Board of Trustees on February 23, 2023, regarding the Provincial Bargaining Coordinating Office's (PBCO) mandate and the challenges our division is facing retaining and recruiting Educational Assistants to support our students.

Foothills School Division was very encouraged to hear within the March 1, 2023, budget announcement that your Ministry would be empowering school authorities to make the responsive and timely budgetary decisions around staffing to ensure we have the right supports in place for our students. This flexibility around staffing, you once again referenced in your March 9, 2023, announcement when you shared the welcome news of the new grant money to support enrolment growth and classroom complexities, is something that our division would like to leverage to support our students.

Once again, I respectfully draw your attention to the inflexible situation Foothills School Division finds itself in as a result of the strict PBCO mandate. We do not have the ability to effectively attract and retain necessary Educational Assistants to meet our local needs.

We ask again, that you advocate to your colleagues in the Treasury Board to revisit how mandates are, and can be, communicated and how they can be made equitable between boards with and without union contracts as our division is committed to not only maximizing the resources available for our children, but to ensuring we can attract and retain the excellent support staff our students deserve.

Thank you again for your consideration and response.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa Letendre." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Theresa Letendre

Board Chair, Foothills School Division

Cc:

Foothills School Division Board of Trustees
Dr. Christopher Fuzessy, Superintendent of Schools
MLA R.J. Sigurdson
MLA Roger Reid
MLA Miranda Rosin